CLAIMS:

1.   A video encoder comprising:

-         means for generating a first image block (101) from an image to be encoded;

-         means for generating a plurality of reference blocks (111);

-         means for generating a transformed image block (115) by applying an
associative image transform to the first image block;

-         means for generating a plurality of transformed reference blocks (113) by
applying the associative image transform to each of the plurality of reference blocks;

-         means for generating a plurality of residual image blocks (119) by determining
a difference between the transformed image block and each of the plurality of transformed
reference blocks;

-         means for selecting a selected reference block (105) of the plurality of
reference blocks in response to the plurality of residual image blocks;

-         means for encoding (103, 107) the first image block in response to the selected
reference block; and

-         means for performing analysis (117) of the image in response to data of the
transformed image block.

2.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the associative transform is a
linear transform.

3.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the associative transform is a
Hadamard transform.

4.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the associative transform is
such that a data point of a transformed image block has a predetermined relationship with an
average value of data points of a corresponding non-transformed image block.

5.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the means for performing analysis of the image (117) is operable to perform content analysis of the image in response to data of the transformed image block.

5   6.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 5 wherein the means for performing analysis of the image (117) is operable to perform content analysis of the image in response to a DC (Direct Current) parameter of the transformed image block.

7.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the means for generating a
10 plurality of reference blocks (111) is operable to generate the reference blocks in response to data values of only the image.

8.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the first image block comprises luminance data.

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9.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the first image block consists in a 4 by 4 luminance data matrix.

10.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the means for encoding (103,
20 107) comprises determining a difference block (103) between the first image block and the selected reference block and means for transforming the difference block (107) using a non-associative transform.

11.   A video encoder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the video encoder is an
25 H.264/AVC video encoder.

12.   A method of video encoding comprising the steps of:
-         generating a first image block from an image to be encoded;
-         generating a plurality of reference blocks;
30 -   generating a transformed image block by applying an associative image transform to the first image block;
-         generating a plurality of transformed reference blocks by applying the associative image transform to each of the plurality of reference blocks;

- generating a plurality of residual image blocks by determining a difference between the transformed image block and each of the plurality of transformed reference blocks;

- selecting a selected reference block of the plurality of reference blocks in response to the plurality of residual image blocks;

- encoding the first image block in response to the selected reference block; and

- performing analysis of the image in response to data of the transformed image block.

13. A computer program enabling the carrying out of a method according to claim 12.

14. A record carrier comprising a computer program as claimed in claim 13.